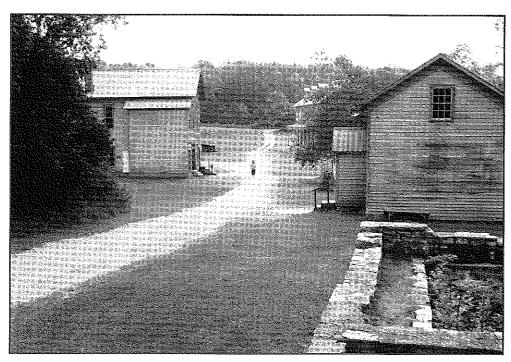
Chapter FourHISTORICAL RESEARCH



Fayette iron-smelting company town, Delta County

All surveys should include a historical research component. Historical research in a survey provides the framework for evaluating the historic significance of the surveyed properties. The primary difference between a reconnaissance level survey and an intensive level one is that an intensive level survey will include historical research on each of the surveyed properties while a reconnaissance level survey will record property-specific historical information only from readily available sources such as published histories and atlases and include no additional property-specific research component.

A reconnaissance level survey will include historical research in two areas:

• General historical development of the survey area or community.

 Historical themes — such as copper mining, agriculture, or education — that the surveyed resources represent or illustrate.

An **intensive level survey** will include research in the above two areas and, in addition, research in the following area:

• Histories of the individual surveyed properties.

The information generated by the research will be used to prepare a historical overview of the survey area for the survey report and, in an intensive level survey, to complete the Significance field of the Ruskin records for the surveyed properties.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The information generated by the research concerning the survey area's general historical development *and* the historical themes will be used to prepare a historical overview for the survey area that is comprised of a brief summary history of the survey area followed by more full discussions of those themes that are important in the area's historical development. The point of this component of the research is to develop the historical

background that will place the surveyed properties in their proper historical context to permit evaluations of their historical significance. The research and the historical overview resulting from it should focus on historical developments associated with the themes that the surveyed properties represent and illustrate. Don't just create a history; relate it to the properties!

SUMMARY HISTORY OF THE SURVEY AREA

The survey report must include a summary history of the survey area, which will help introduce the important historic themes and place them in a broader context. The summary history should be written in prose (not a time-line). It should include key dates in the area's chronology and introduce the area's early settlement history, driving forces behind its growth and economy (including significant

people or ethnic groups) and other developmental factors. The example for Port Hope, taken from the Port Hope multiple property national register nomination, introduces each of the significant historic themes represented by properties included in the nomination: lumbering, forest fires of 1881 and relief efforts, agriculture, transportation, ethnic history, and architecture.

Example: Summary History for Port Hope

Port Hope began in 1858 with a sawmill and dock constructed by William R. Stafford, a partner in a firm established to lumber the area and market its products to Cleveland. Lumbering continued to be the area's chief industry until forest fires in 1871 and 1881 destroyed most of the remaining timber. The 1881 fires, coming after decades of lumbering had left mountains of timber debris in their wake, not only destroyed most of the remaining forests in the area, but also cleared much of the debris left from the lumbering activities, opening the Port Hope area and much of the Thumb to farming far more than the lumbering activities themselves. The land itself was fertile. As a result, in the 1880s and 1890s agriculture became the major livelihood of Port Hope's residents. Many early settlers in Port Hope in the 1860s and 1870s were Germans and in the late nineteenth century the Germans became Port Hope's largest ethnic group. Cheap water transportation on the lakes made possible the community's economic growth in the nineteenth century. Lumber and, later, agricultural products were shipped to market exclusively by boat prior to the construction of a railroad line to the town. The opening of a rail link to the existing line at Harbor Beach in 1903 took place at the same time that commerce on the lakes was in decline because of competition from the ever-growing railroad net. The railroad line gave Port Hope a greater market for its agricultural products and encouraged further development of agriculture in the area. Port Hope's architecture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflected the development of the town and the contemporary architectural tastes of the nation at large and of Michigan's Thumb region.

THE MATIC NARRATIVES

The next step is to identify themes, also known as areas of significance, based on the summary history. What do we mean by themes? National Register Bulletin 15, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (page 8), defines a theme as "a means of organizing properties into coherent patterns based on elements such as environment, social/ethnic groups, transportation networks, technology, or political developments that have influenced the development of an area during one or more periods of prehistory or history." The National Register of Historic Places has defined the following broad historic themes or areas of significance:

Agriculture Archaeology

Architecture

Art

Commerce Communications

Community Planning and Development

Conservation

Economics Education

Engineering

Entertainment/Recreation

Ethnic Heritage Exploration/Settlement

Health/Medicine

Industry Invention

Landscape Architecture

Law Literature

Maritime History

Military

Performing Arts Philosophy

Politics/Government

Religion Science Social History Transportation

Other

The Michigan SHPO uses these themes defined by the National Register of Historic Places as a basic framework, but has further subdivided many of them into subthemes that are more specific to Michigan history. One example is Copper Mining as a subtheme of Industry. A list of these Michigan subthemes may be found in Appendix B. Those researching and preparing historical narratives for survey projects should use the national

Page 32 Historical Research register themes and Michigan subthemes in defining the historical themes appropriate to the survey area. The subthemes should be further refined as needed for an understanding of the survey area's historic resources.

One or more thematic narratives based on historical research in the important themes related to the survey area's history will form the second part of the historical overview. The narrative for each theme should provide detailed background on key historical developments and persons associated with the theme and survey area. Some historic themes may require researching at more than just the local level if local developments relate closely to broader statewide or national trends. Secondary sources should be consulted as needed to broaden the perspective. The thematic narrative for lumbering from the Port Hope multiple property national register nomination provides an example of how the results of thematic research can be presented in order to establish the context within which specific resources can be evaluated. The Port Hope lumbering thematic narrative places the history of lumbering in Port Hope within the broader context of lumbering in Michigan and Huron County and defines the roles of leading local figures William R. Stafford and Robert C. Ogilvie in the industry. This information provides a context for evaluating the historic significance of surviving properties owned by Stafford and Ogilvie, which include saw- and planing mill sites, Stafford's own residence, workers' houses associated with Stafford's business enterprises, and a commercial building owned by Ogilvie. Section E of National Register Bulletin 16B; How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, provides additional guidance on preparing thematic narratives. National Register Bulletin 16B is available from the SHPO.

Example: Lumbering Industry Thematic Narrative for Port Hope

Commercial lumbering in Michigan began in the 1830s, 40s, and 50s with the development of improved sawmilling technology and the introduction of steam-powered sawmills. Extensive lumbering began along the east shore of Lake Michigan and the west shore of Lake Huron in the Lower Peninsula and gradually worked its way inland along the major waterways. The sawmills were located at the mouths of the streams and the logs driven downstream to them during the spring high waters. Chicago was from the first the principal destination of lumber cut along Michigan's west shore, while the mills on the Lake Huron side of the state served Detroit, Toledo, Cleveland, and Buffalo for the most part. In 1860 there were nearly 1,000 sawmills operating in Michigan producing in that year about 800 million board feet of lumber, principally white pine. The fine quality of the wood and the phenomenal growth of Michigan's and the Midwest's population in the years after 1860 led to rapidly expanding lumber production in Michigan. Production statewide reached a maximum of 4,292,000,000 board feet in 1888, Production began to decline thereafter because of the depletion of timber lands; however, Michigan continued to be the leading producer of lumber in the nation in 1900.

Commercial lumbering along the west shore of Lake Huron began in the 1830s and was well underway at Port Huron, Saginaw, Bay City, and other places by the late 1840s. Port Huron reached its high point of lumber production — 56 million board feet — in 1873. The Saginaw Valley reached its high point of production of more than one billion board feet in 1882. More northerly points such as Alpena and Cheboygan reached their peak production in the late 1880s and early 1890s. Much of the production from the east shore mill towns was sent to market in ships and barges, and Bay City and Saginaw in particular became large shipbuilding centers in the late nineteenth century.

Eastern investors, a number from Maine and New Hampshire, played an important role in the Michigan lumber boom beginning as early as the 1840s, if not before. These investors witnessed the gradual depletion of the northern New England pine woods in the mid-nineteenth century and the consequent rise in value of the remaining timber lands. They recognized the opportunities for profit from Michigan timber lands, which could still often be bought at bargain prices from Uncle Sam and the lumber inexpensively shipped by water to an ever growing market. Single investors or groups of investors often bought thousands of acres of lands, logged them off over many years, and then resold as much as possible while developing some themselves for agricultural purposes.

Example: Lumbering Industry Thematic Narrative for Port Hope (continued)

Huron County, at the tip of the Thumb between Lake Huron and Saginaw Bay, was established as a county in 1859. The first sawmills, small, water-powered affairs, were established in 1838 and 1839. John Hopson put up the first steam sawmill in 1850 at Rock Falls south of Harbor Beach. Lumber and shingle manufacturing quickly became the county's chief industries. The principal woods were pine, hemlock, cedar, basswood, beech, maple, birch, and ash. A series of forest fires burned over much of the county in October 1871, at the same time that the Chicago Fire raged. Nevertheless, in 1874 the county produced 36 million board feet of lumber. In 1876 several planks cut at Verona Mills in the county were displayed at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. The planks were sixteen feet long, five feet two inches wide, four inches thick, and without knots or other flaws. In September 1881, however, another series of disastrous fires burned over the bulk of Huron and much of several other counties and put an end to large scale lumbering in the county. Smaller scale operations continued for a few more years here and there.

In Port Hope William R. Stafford was the pioneer lumberman. Stafford (1828-1916) came to Michigan from Bath, New Hampshire, in 1849 and settled in Lexington, on the Lake Huron shore between Port Huron and Huron County. In 1852, Stafford became a partner in a mercantile business that apparently involved lumbering. The business was reorganized in 1854 with Clark Haywood, another New Hampshire native and a former employee of Stafford's, as his partner.

In 1851, Stafford, Reuben B. Dimond, William Southard, and Josiah F. Wilson, all (with the probable exception of Dimond) New Hampshire natives who were personal friends and business associates, made purchase of timber lands in the area near what became Port Hope. In 1857 or 1858, Stafford, Haywood, and a third New Hampshire native, former U.S. Senator B. W. Jenness, then a resident of Cleveland, formed a partnership to exploit the timber resources of the Port Hope area. Stafford had charge of the sawmill the partners built in 1858 at what became the settlement of Port Hope. The mill produced lumber, lath, and shingles. Jenness ran a lumberyard in Cleveland that the Port Hope mill supplied. During some years prior to the 1871 fires the mill produced 7 million board feet of lumber. The 1871 fire destroyed the mill, dock, and lumber on hand, a loss of \$100,000 to Stafford & Haywood (Jenness had withdrawn in 1868). Stafford & Haywood rebuilt the mill and dock in 1872. As of 1874 they produced 1.4 million board feet out of the 36 million produced in the county. At least four operations in the county were larger. The 1881 fire burned the mill and dock again, a \$40,000 loss, and, in 1884, Haywood also withdrew from the firm, leaving Stafford as sole owner. Stafford built a third, smaller sawmill and planing mill and sash and door factory to supply primarily local needs.

In 1880, R. C. Ogilvie built a second sawmill and dock at a cost of \$8,000. The mill and dock were also burned in 1881. Ogilvie rebuilt by 1883, but the mill apparently closed for lack of timber by about 1889. Stafford's sawmill is listed in the *Michigan State Gazetteer and Business Directory* as late as the 1893 edition, and probably closed in the early 1890s. Perhaps some lumber and other wood building products were shipped to Cleveland until the very end of local sawmilling operations. Mrs. C. J. Bisbee in her 1915 historical sketch of Port Hope states that "The mills operated until every bit of virgin timber was nailed into Ohio houses."

A by-product of lumbering in Michigan was salt manufacturing. What is known to geologists as the Michigan Basin, which includes the Lower Peninsula, is one of the greatest areas of halite concentration in the world. Subsurface deposits of rock salt and brine occur in many places. In 1859 the Michigan legislature, hoping to encourage salt production, authorized a bounty of ten cents per bushel produced. This bounty was soon repealed, but not before it had done its work in generating real interest in salt manufacturing. Michigan soon became the nation's leading salt producer, and by 1884 was producing half of the nation's salt.

Salt production in Huron County and elsewhere in Michigan was encouraged by the plentiful supply of wood that fueled the engines that pumped the brine from which salt was obtained up to the surface and

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Example: Lumbering Industry Thematic Narrative for Port Hope (continued)

powered the furnaces that evaporated water from the great pans or vats of brine. Cheap fuel made Michigan salt the most inexpensive in the nation. In Huron County salt manufacturing began in 1863 in Port Austin and continued until about 1890. In 1884 the county had eleven salt-manufacturing operations, several of them using more than one well. The decline coincided not with the depletion of the brine deposits, but with the destruction of the woods that provided the cheap fuel.

In Port Hope the first salt-manufacturing enterprise, the Port Hope Salt Company (in which W. R. Stafford was the principal owner) was established in 1874. Its plant appears to have been typical of the Huron County salt "blocks." The first year the company produced 16,000 barrels of salt at 280 pounds per barrel. In 1884 the company used 10,000 cords of wood to produce 60,000 barrels. It had a well 800 feet deep (Huron County wells ranged from 600 to nearly 2,000 feet in depth) and four and one-half inches in diameter. The brine was pumped to the surface into five evaporating "pans" and the brine allowed to settle to the bottom. So-called "bitter water" at the top was drained off. Furnaces provided the chief means of evaporation. A force of twenty coopers produced the needed barrels. Much of the salt produced went for dairy purposes, but the company also shipped much of its product to the mining regions of Montana. The Port Hope Salt Company closed in 1890.

Robert G. Ogilvie established a second salt-manufacturing concern in Port Hope in 1883. His operation had its own sawmill and barrel factory and produced 150 barrels of salt daily in 1884. Ogilvie's operation apparently closed by 1890.

The remains of the Port Hope Salt Company plant were dismantled in 1913-14, but the site has not been developed and some remains are still present. At the site of the Ogilvie salt block, some development has taken place and no remains are visible. No archaeological testing of either site has been done.

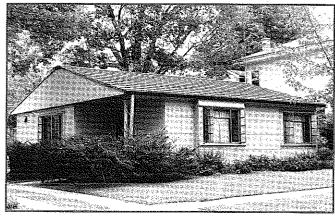
For most projects, the format of a summary history that introduces the important themes followed by a separate narrative for each theme will work best in terms of use of the historical and thematic overview for placing the surveyed properties

in their appropriate historical contexts. For small-scale survey projects, a single narrative that includes adequate development of the historical themes to permit placing the properties in their appropriate contexts may be more manageable.

Architectural Narrative

For most survey projects, *architecture* will prove a relevant theme, and an architectural narrative will be necessary. Architectural narratives too often tend to be generic discussions focusing on *style* that provide little detail about the specific survey area. This should be avoided! It may be worthwhile for the person preparing the architectural narrative to begin with a fresh review of the architecture in the field. Working from only the survey photos months after the completion of the field survey may hinder the most insightful analysis of the architecture.

The purpose of the architectural narrative is to place the survey area's architecture in the broader context of the community and region in which it is located. The architectural narrative should discuss the architecture in terms of property types. A



A Lustron all-steel house, Dowagiac

property type is defined in National Register Bulletin 16B (page 14) as "a grouping of individual properties characterized by common physical and/or associative

attributes." Property types should be defined using the property types list in Appendix B.

The architectural narrative should discuss all property types within the broad property type categories (see Appendix B, introduction to Property Types), such as residential, commercial, or agricultural, for which a substantial number of properties are present. For example, for rural survey areas containing numerous farms, the broad range of agricultural building and structure types present should be discussed and analyzed. For older in-town neighborhoods containing many old stable/carriage house buildings, the architectural narrative should include some discussion of this building type. Conversely, property types represented in the survey area by only one or a very small number of properties — typically churches, schools, and other institutional resources - need not be included in the architectural narrative. For the few institutional properties present in most survey areas, any needed architectural analysis can be presented within the thematic narratives for the themes, such as religion or education, with which the properties are associated.

An important purpose of the architectural narrative, as it is for the entire survey report, is to educate public officials, planners, property owners, and the public in general to what is interesting and significant from an architectural standpoint about the survey area's properties. The relatively small number of high style properties in the survey area certainly merit discussion and analysis, but the narrative should focus on the common property types and forms generally represented by the vast majority of surveyed properties whose significance will not be so obvious to the report's readers.

The narrative should be organized by broad property type, such as residential and commercial. The discussions of property types should be arranged in the overview in the approximate order of their predominance. In most survey areas, residential properties will form by far the greatest

proportion of the surveyed resources; in such cases, the residential section should come first in the architectural narrative.

In the discussion of each property type, discussion and analysis of the issues of form and massing should almost always precede any discussion of style. For example, in a section of an architectural narrative that discusses single-family houses within the broad category of domestic (i. e. residential) architecture, the houses should be discussed in terms of the specific house forms present, such as bungalow or upright-and-wing, before they are discussed in terms of their architectural style (see the House Form and the Style lists under Style in Appendix B). Building forms characteristic of the survey area and broader community, such as a certain house form prevalent in a survey area, but less common elsewhere, should be identified. Any locally distinct varieties of standard architectural styles and the common use of distinctive decorative elements in the local architecture, such as the polychromatic brickwork found in many houses in the Dutch settlement area of West Michigan, should be noted and discussed.

Examples of pattern-book, pre-cut, and manufactured architecture should always be discussed, if possible, as part of the architectural narrative. While the originals of old pattern and plan books and catalogs are hard to come by, many of these books have been reprinted by a variety of publishers, and more are being done every year. Dover Publications, Inc., the publisher of by far the greatest number of reprints, is the architectural historian's friend, having reprinted dozens of old plan and pattern books since the 1960s, with most of them still in print in inexpensive paper editions. It is impossible to list here all the reprints that may prove useful in survey projects in Michigan (many more are listed in The History of Michigan's Architecture and Landscapes: A Select Reading List, available from the SHPO), but the following should prove especially useful for survey work involving Michigan properties:

- Aladdin Co., *Aladdin "Built in a Day" House Catalog*, a reprint of the 1917 pre-cut homes catalog of the Aladdin Company of Bay City, the key Michigan pre-cut homes producer.
- Downing, Andrew Jackson, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, a reprint of an influential 1850 book which, like Downing's earlier *Cottage Residences*, also reprinted by Dover (see below), provided designs in a broad variety of "Victorian" modes.
- Downing, Andrew Jackson, *Victorian Cottage Residences*, a reprint of *Cottage Residences*, which, first published in 1842, was one of the first of the Victorian house plan book genre, and highly important in influencing the public's taste away from the Greek Revival toward "Victorian."

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- Gordon-Van Tine Co., 117 House Designs of the Twenties, a reprint of this Davenport, Iowa, company's 1923 pre-cut homes catalog. Gordon-Van Tine was an important manufacturer, and houses at least tentatively identified as theirs have turned up in Michigan.
- Mulliner Box & Planing Co., *Turn-of-the-Century Doors*, *Windows and Decorative Millwork: The Mulliner Catalog of 1893*, a reprint of a catalog of Late Victorian exterior and interior architectural woodwork. Although the catalog reproduced bore the name of Mulliner, a firm in Quincy, Illinois, it is really a catalog presenting woodwork of standardized design approved by the "Wholesale Sash, Door and Blind Manufacturers' Association of the Northwest" that was available throughout the Midwestern region and beyond from numerous lumber yards.
- Roberts, E. L., & Co., Roberts' Illustrated Millwork Catalog: A Sourcebook of Turn-of-the-Century Architectural Woodwork, a reprint of a 1903 woodwork catalog issued by Roberts, a Chicago firm. Like the Mulliner catalog of 1893, this one also illustrates many (though not exclusively) designs approved by the Wholesale Sash, Door and Blind Manufacturers' Association that were widely available throughout the Midwest.

Houses by Mail: A Guide to Houses from Sears, Roebuck and Company, by Katherine Cole Stevenson and H. Ward Jandl (Washington, D. C.: The Preservation Press, 1986), is another useful source in that it illustrates and provides date frames for all (more or less: a few additional models have since turned up) models marketed by Sears, the nation's largest dealer in pre-cut homes from 1908 to 1940.

The narrative should provide information about architects, engineers, artisans and craftspeople, and contractors who worked in the survey area. Biographical data, such as birthplace and birth and death dates, educational background, firm affiliations and dates, and important commissions comprise important pieces of information that should be sought and included in the narrative. Newspaper obituary notices are an important source of information. In addition, the following can be useful sources of information on architects and engineers:

- Avery Obituary Index of Architects. Microform/Columbia University. Boston, MA: G. K. Hall, 1984.
- Downs, Winfield Scott, ed. Who's Who in Engineering. A Biographical Dictionary of the Engineering Profession. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc. (Editor, title, and publisher vary between editions.) Eight editions were published from 1922 to 1959.
- Kervick, Francis W. Architects in America of Catholic Tradition. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1962.
- Koyl, George S., ed. American Architects Directory. New York: R. R. Bowker Co. Editions were issued in 1956 and 1962.
- Withey, Henry F, and Elsie Rathburn Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*. Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., 1956.

Information on interiors is not typically included in surveys. However, if information is available, it should be included. A discussion of interior matters, such as floor plans and finishes, technological features, and the evolution of living habits reflected in the changing form and character of the buildings, can be useful, but only if the information presented results from inspection of a substantial number of survey area property interiors. General discussions using background information from books that cannot be directly related to the actual surveyed properties have little value in the architectural narrative and survey report.

PROPERTY SPECIFIC RESEARCH

All surveys will include some property-specific research:

In reconnaissance level surveys, the level of research will generally be minimal and include the use only of the most readily available sources, such as old county and fire insurance maps and published histories, as well as information, such as historic name and date, gleaned from inspections of the properties. The recording of property-specific

information from directories, tax assessors' records, and other more detailed sources is generally not a part of a reconnaissance survey. For many if not most properties, no historical information will be located.

In **intensive level surveys**, at least a basic level of information should be gathered for each forty-or-more-year-old property, and more in-depth research performed on those that appear to possess

more than typical historical or architectural importance. In an intensive level survey, the purpose of property-specific historical research is to provide a basic, standard level of historical documentation for all of the surveyed properties and to help determine which of them possesses significance through associations with historically important events or persons or because of their architectural, artistic, or engineering qualities. The criteria for evaluation of the National Register of Historic Places form the most widely used criteria against which properties are evaluated. All survey personnel should become familiar with the national register criteria and with National Register Bulletin 15, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Bulletin 15 is available from the SHPO.

The amount of time and effort spent on researching a particular property should relate to the property's apparent historic significance. While basic research should be performed for all properties for which some information is readily available, the property-specific research should focus on key properties for which there is a high expectation of finding documentation. These key properties include:

- Properties that may be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places; and
- Properties that are landmarks in already listed or potentially eligible districts because of their age, architectural or artistic character, or known associations with important events or persons.

Property specific research can be the most timeconsuming aspect of a survey project. For that reason, surveyors should have realistic expectations about what information is available, so that research efforts can be appropriately directed. The fact of the matter is that for most properties finding basic information such as a precise date of construction and an architect or builder will prove impossible.

Research for Intensive Level Surveys: Phase One

Research should begin with basic research on all of the surveyed properties. This phase should be accomplished as quickly and efficiently as possible using readily available standard sources such as published and unpublished histories; county maps and atlases, plat books, and fire insurance maps;

city and county directories; state gazetteers; tax assessors' records; and building permits. The information to be researched in this phase includes:

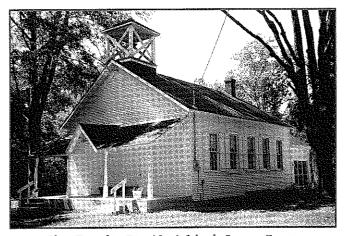
- Historic name
- Date of construction
- Architect/builder/craftspeople or firms (including engineers, artists, and people and firms providing decorative work)
- Original use
- · Original owner

For properties that are less than forty years old, only the date of construction need be researched. The only exception is for properties of clear importance, such as public and institutional buildings.

Research for Intensive Level Surveys: Phase Two

For the properties that appear more significant, more in-depth research should be performed in order to provide information to complete the significance fields in the property record. These include:

- Areas of Significance
- Subthemes
- Statement of History and Significance
- Significant Persons
- Period of Significance



Olive Township Dist. No. 1 School, Ottawa County

The additional research may also provide new or more detailed information to include in other fields in the property record, including the following:

- Historic Name
- Date Built
- Architect/builder/craftspeople or firms

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More historical information tends to be available for public and institutional properties than for other types:

For Public and Institutional Properties and Churches, existing records of the appropriate governmental agencies, school districts, churches, or other organizations should be located and used to provide documentation. These may provide documentation of dates of construction, names of architects and contractors, and the circumstances that led to construction of the resource. For district schools built in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the annual reports of school districts to the Michigan Department of Public Instruction, on microfilm at the Archives of Michigan in Lansing, should be used. Information provided for each district on an annual basis includes the schoolhouse's building material (log, frame, brick, or stone), the number of students and teachers, and expenditures on land and building. The construction of public and institutional buildings, schools, and churches were important events in their communities that might have been noticed in the newspapers of the day. Research in old newspapers should be performed if newsworthy dates, such as

the date of a cornerstone laying or building dedication are known, or, depending on the amount of available time, at least a general time frame within which the event took place is known. Otherwise, the search through historic newspapers could be too time-consuming.

For Parks, Cemeteries, and Other Open or Designed Spaces, the following information should be researched:

- · Dates and circumstances of their establishment
- Dates and specific property involved in initial land acquisition and subsequent additions
- Initial plans and later modifications
- Landscape architects, engineers, or others involved in design of the site
- Dates of construction and designers of site features, such as buildings, monuments, fountains, and mausolea

Records held by municipal, county, or state offices or cemetery boards with jurisdiction over the site and original plans for the grounds or buildings or other features on the grounds and minutes of meetings where important decisions were made may be available to help document the property.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH

The sources of information that will be used for general history, thematic, and property-specific research will vary with the nature and location of resources, but the following will generally be useful tools. For property-specific research, typically the first five are the ones most likely to provide a basic level of information; the remainder should be used as appropriate to obtain additional information for the more significant-appearing properties. See also National Register Bulletin 39, *Researching a Historic Property*, and David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past around You*, 2nd ed. (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000).

- Published and unpublished histories. These
 include county, local, and neighborhood
 histories; histories of churches and other
 organizations; and other works which may
 contain information on properties in or persons
 associated with the survey area.
- County maps and atlases, plat books, and fire insurance maps. Along with the maps,

- the county atlases often provide business directories and historical and biographical material.
- City and county directories. Few of these date from before the 1860s. City directories published in the 1890s and later typically contain not only alphabetical listings but also street directories by street name and house number that make locating information about a particular address much easier.
- State gazetteers. For small communities without directories or for the years before a local directory was published, the state gazetteers published in 1838, 1856, 1860, and every other year from 1863 to 1931 provide useful general information about communities as well as local business directories.
- Tax assessors' records. These contain dates
 of construction for buildings. The drawback
 to their use is that the date given is often an

- estimate and not based on actual documentation. Tax assessors' records should be used, but with a healthy degree of skepticism and only as a rough guide where nothing better is available.
- Tax records. The actual tax records are a useful source of information, but they, like other written or graphic sources of information, provide evidence rather than certain documentation. The tax records for any one year generally list individually all the properties a person owned with an assessment and tax paid for each one. A substantial increase in the assessment on one parcel from one year to the next may suggest that some major improvement, probably a house, was made. However, there are many pitfalls: Perhaps there was some other improvement, such as a large barn. Possibly the reassessment reflects a general reassessment that applied to everyone — researchers should always use at least two control properties owned by others over the same time period to ensure that a large increase in assessment applied only to the one property they are researching. Another complication in using these records is that many no longer exist. The State Archives of Michigan has collected many sets of early tax records and others have been collected by regional archives at Western Michigan University, Central Michigan University, Michigan Technological University, Oakland University, and the Detroit Public Library, but for many areas and years, the rolls may be unavailable (see State Archives of Michigan, Circular No. 1, for locations of collections of assessment rolls).
- Building permit records. Some Michigan communities, including Detroit, retain building permit records dating back many years. Because building permits were generally obtained just prior to the beginning of construction on buildings, they can be useful in providing an accurate date of construction. Permits also sometimes identify the architect or contractor.
- Local historians and knowledgeable informants, including long-term property owners. Researchers should always be on the lookout for informants such as homeowners

- who have lived on the same property for long periods of time who may be able to provide precise dates and other useful information ("Yes, we had the house built and moved in on December 28, 1938; I still have the plans in the attic").
- Federal census records. Data for the 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 censuses include population, products of agriculture, and products of industry schedules that provide property-specific information. These are located at the State Archives of Michigan. Population schedules (only) are available on microfilm at the Library of Michigan in Lansing and the Graduate Library of the University of Michigan (perhaps other regional repositories as well). The National Archives web site (www.nara.gov) lists among its holdings "general farm schedules" for Jackson County from the 1920 census. The Michigan State University Library's Government Documents Section has certain census of agriculture materials for 1935, 1940, 1945, 1950, 1954, and 1959 that may provide property-specific information (see Magic, the MSU Library catalog, http://magic.msu.edu).
- State census records. State censuses, conducted periodically, usually in years ending in 4, provided schedules of inhabitants, agriculture, and industry. This is a rich source of information, but only a few survive "due to a variety of tragedies." The Michigan Historical Collections at the Bentley Library, University of Michigan, has some state census records for Washtenaw County. Local repositories may house some others. (See Circular 9, the State Archives of Michigan's list of holdings.)
- Rural property inventories. These are descriptions of rural properties on large file cards that include site plans, building outlines with dimensions, dates of construction, and other useful information. They were prepared for the most part in the 1936-42 period under the sponsorship of the State Tax Commission and in cooperation with the Works Progress Administration. The State Archives of Michigan is the primary repository. See their Circular No. 16. Records for some counties may exist in local repositories.

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- Vertical and newspaper clippings files. Many local libraries as well as historical societies possess vertical files containing newspaper articles, booklets, and other materials or files of newspaper clippings arranged by subject that may provide historical documentation.
- Photograph collections. The State Archives of Michigan and other regional and local archives, libraries, and historical societies possess collections of old photographs, including post card views, which provide valuable documentation of the historic appearance of individual buildings, complexes, and streetscapes. Older survey data at the SHPO may also prove useful in documenting the historic appearance of properties that have since been altered.
- Birdseye views. Lithographic views of a number of Michigan communities were made in the latter half of the nineteenth century. They provide views of the communities as if the observer were suspended above the landscape and depict the buildings present at the time the view was made with a fair degree of accuracy. They can be useful in documenting whether a particular building was standing at the time the view was made.
- Biographical albums and records. Numerous statewide and county volumes containing biographies of prominent and not-so-prominent Michigan citizens were published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While often self-serving in tone and content, the biographies provide much useful information that would not otherwise be available.
- Newspapers. Old newspapers, despite their general lack of attention to local matters, can provide the only or best source of information about some of the buildings and structures included in surveys. Newspapers' local news columns, often found buried in the middle of the papers, sometimes contain brief reports on building activities such as "Fred Smith has started work on George Jones' new house in Horton. Smith's brickyard is now making the

- brick." Newspapers sometimes contain the minutes of village or city council or county board of supervisors meetings where projects relating to surveyed resources were considered. Obituary notices can provide the only or best source of biographical information for people whose properties are included in the survey. The down side of newspaper research is the time involved; for this reason, newspaper research will usually prove unfeasible for all but a few of the most important properties for which limited date frames for the construction period are known.
- *Property abstracts.* Generally held by the property owner if they are available at all, abstracts provide complete chains of title for properties. They are useful tools for documenting the ownership during the period when the surveyed resource was constructed if that information is not otherwise available.
- Public land records. Found at the county register of deeds offices, these can be used to provide the same information as property abstracts, but the process is cumbersome and time-consuming (some registers of deeds are also less than cooperative in allowing public access to the actual records) and should be reserved for only a very small number of the most important properties where the information is not otherwise available. For researching the histories of platted subdivisions, the volumes of plats on file with the county register of deeds will be useful. A full set of these plats is also available in the Department of Treasury, Auditor-General Plats, Record Group 67-97, at the Archives of Michigan in Lansing.
- Federal land patent records. Found at the General Land Office records website of the U. S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management, http://www.glorecords.blm.gov/, these provide information about the original patentees of federal lands. Searches can be done by name, county, township, range, and section, etc.

Use of City Directories in Researching Historic Themes

The development of thematic narratives for all types of survey will require research in city directories. The level of research will depend on the type of survey being conducted.

In reconnaissance level surveys, the thematic research for surveys of urbanized areas will often require the use of city directories when they are available. Rather than providing property-specific data that will be entered into the Ruskin property records, the directory research in a reconnaissance level survey will have as its goal the identification of general patterns and trends in the survey area. To provide useful information for the thematic narratives through an efficient, cost-effective process, directory research should be carried out according to a predetermined plan. This should include delineation of the specific area(s) for which directory research will be carried out, such as the entire survey area or one or more smaller zones within it. Determinations of which years of the directories will be used and what types of information will be recorded must also be made. Directory research year-by-year probably cannot be performed within a realistic time frame for most survey projects, but a thorough review of the directory entries at tenyear intervals should prove feasible for most projects and should be adequate to provide solid information about historical trends in the survey area. Directory research should begin with the earliest available directories that include the survey area regardless of whether a street directory is present to facilitate the looking up of names (unless the directories are so thick that the process would be unmanageable apply common sense).

The directories will provide much useful general information about such topics as the types of businesses along a particular street or block or the occupations, places where people worked, and ethnic background of residents of specific blocks or neighborhoods at different periods. For older residential areas, for example, city directories may provide evidence of ethnic concentrations or concentrations of residents who worked in a single industry or trade or several related ones or for one or several firms. Researching ethnic heritage, to the extent that it can be determined from the names alone, may indicate the presence of an ethnic

community or be used to substantiate information about the presence of such a community gleaned from other sources. Information about occupations and firms may reveal important social history or substantiate information about that history from other sources.

The research from the directories in reconnaissance level surveys should provide not only general information on the identified trends, but also specific examples of these trends for inclusion in the report's thematic narratives.

In **intensive level surveys**, surveys of urban areas will include the same research program described above for reconnaissance level surveys but will, in addition, *require* the use of early city directories for property-specific research. The goal of property-specific directory research is to document for each property the year when a directory entry for it first appears, the earliest occupants listed and their occupations, and later long-term or significant occupants. The results of that research will be incorporated into the Ruskin property records for the individual properties.

Oral Interviews

Oral interviews can provide information important to an understanding of the surveyed historic resources. This can include documentation of events or the lives of people significant in terms of local history, to which surveyed properties may relate, and documentation of the histories of surveyed properties. Oral history information will be the only type available for many surveyed properties. But some informants provide more reliable information than others. Interviewers must always evaluate the reliability of information being provided to them, just as other researchers evaluate the reliability of data obtained from other sources. Interviewers should always seek those persons with first-hand knowledge of the subject. First-hand information, facts of which the person being interviewed has personal knowledge through direct participation in the events or documentation in hand, is the most likely to be reliable. In one case a person, nearly fifty years after he had built the house in which he still resided, was able to relate the circumstances which led to the construction of the house, the name of the contractor, anecdotes relating to the construction process, and the date

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when the family occupied the house. That same person also retained the plans used in the house's construction, the construction and mortgage documents, which provided dates and the house's cost, and bills that documented a later renovation. Second- or third-hand information must be considered less reliable. The originator of the information may not be known, so that no evaluation can be made of whether that person was in a position to have first-hand knowledge of the history. In addition, the information, while potentially accurate, is more likely to have been corrupted in the process of being passed along.

Information that cannot be verified through primary sources or through a second independent source may be included in the survey data and report, but the source of the information should be made clear: "Fred Smith, the son of the house's first owner, John Smith, reported that the house was built in 1925 as a wedding present from his parents, Milton and Freda Smith." This sentence provides the information but also makes it clear that the information came not from John Smith or his wife, who presumably would have been in a position to know the true facts, but from his son, who would have had to learn them second-hand.

Interviewers should use interview formats that suit them and the persons being interviewed. Some will find tape recorders essential, while others will find pencil and paper a more efficient mode. Regardless of how the information is gathered, the results should be put into writing as soon as possible after the interview, while the details remain fresh. A memo or other record of the interview should be prepared and become part of the permanent research materials resulting from the project. A literal

transcription of the interview is fine but usually not necessary, although a literal transcription of an anecdote or a part of the interview where more detailed information was being provided may be valuable. A summary of the pertinent facts set forth in a clear and consistent manner is essential. Information of which the person being interviewed felt unsure should be clearly labeled. The summary report should clearly state the names of the interviewer and person being interviewed, the date of the interview, and the address and phone number of the person being interviewed. If hand-written, the summary should be legible. Summaries or transcripts of interviews made during the course of the survey project provide information that may not be available again in the future. They should be preserved in an archive or other appropriate local or regional repository or, if none is available, included in the final report for the survey as an appendix.

What kinds of information should interviewers seek to obtain through oral interviews?

- Dates of construction and dates and description of alterations.
- Architects, engineers, contractors, artisans, and suppliers related to construction of the resource.
- Sources of special materials, such as stone ornament or trim.
- The property's functions or uses.
- Biographical information about the original or early owners or other important persons associated with the property.
- Events or other important history associated with the property.